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NEXT MEETING: Thursday 2 November 1995 in the in the Lounge Room,
Morling College, Eastwood

Please note new starting time of 7.30 pm

Speaker: Mike Petras

Topic: *"Can the star spangled banner advance Australia fair?"*

The Society's Officers:

Chairman
Rev E R Rogers
119 Midson Road
Epping 2121
Telephone 876 2277

Secretary
Mr O C Nannelli
9a Werona Street
Pennant Hills 2120
Telephone 481 0477

Treasurer
Mr P E Hayward
143 Epping Road
Marsfield 2122
Telephone 878 3447

Archivist
Rev E A Archer
9 Rosebank Avenue
Epping 2121
Telephone 876 2266

Editor: The Recorder
Rev P B Kilkeary
PO Box 586
Strathfield 2135
Telephone 642 6862

BAPTIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF NSW

Minutes of meeting held 3 August 1995 in the lounge room, Morling College.

Twenty-one persons present.

The Chairman, Rev E.R. Rogers, welcomed those attending and opened in prayer.

Apologies: Mr O. Nanelli and Mrs L. McDonald.

Confirmation of Minutes:

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of 4 May 1995 were confirmed as a correct record.

Correspondence:

Dr Craig Skinner suggesting that the Historical Society undertake the preparation of a new Baptist Hymnal. The suggestion was referred to Rev J.H. Edmondstone.

General Business:

Annual Meeting — It was noted that there had been a very good response to the Annual Meeting.

Future Meetings:

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| November | Mike Petras: "Can the star spangled banner advance Australia fair?" |
| February | Arthur Lockley: Rev Frank Starr |
| May (AGM) | Michael Chavura: A topic relating to the history of particular baptists in Australia |
| August | Ted Archer: "Baptist Presidents and their emphases" |

Filing Cabinets — 2 additional have been purchased.

Essay Competition — 10 enquiries have been received.

Starting Time — It was resolved that future meetings start at 7.30 pm.

Reports:

Treasurer — report tabled

Archivist — no further report

Speaker:

Rev E.R. Rogers introduced guest speaker, Rev Dr Graeme Chatfield who read a paper on "The Clarity of Scripture and Authority in the Church — an Anabaptist Perspective"

After questions, Dr Chatfield was thanked by the Chairman.

Close

The meeting concluded with prayer and the benediction.

Secretary

THE DOUGHTY BAPTIST PIONEER OF THE SAINT GEORGE DISTRICT

CHARLES HOWARD OF KINGSGROVE

There is a concentration of Baptist Churches in the Saint George district. When the St George County Council was established it officially embraced the then four municipalities of Rockdale, Kogarah and Hurstville. Much of the credit for initiating Baptist expansion within that area must be given to a man of firm conviction and great vision. That worthy pioneer of Baptist causes was Charles Howard who exerted himself to maintain places of worship, witness and service for Baptists prepared to gather together for that purpose. The extension of this witness and service was centred on the Church at Kingsgrove, established by Howard as a branch of the historic Newtown Church.

Charles Howard came of Baptist stock. He was born in 1846 and according to the AONSW Shipping Lists arrived in Sydney at the age of two years on 9 October 1848 with a family group. His father, Thomas, aged twenty-two, is described as a farm labourer born at St Albans, Hertfordshire, a Baptist and able to read and write. His mother Elizabeth, aged twenty-five, was born in Huntingdonshire, a Baptist able to read and write. Accompanying them was James Howard, a farm servant, aged eighteen, born at St Albans, Hertfordshire, a Baptist able to read and write. Quite obviously James was a relative, either a brother or cousin of Thomas. The family settled in the Canterbury district, at that time defined as all the area between Liverpool Road and an undefined area beyond Cooks River.

As he grew to manhood Charles became a timber-getter by trade. He acquired a small farm at Kingsgrove, part of the original Laycock estate. Hannah Laycock was the first settler in the area now covered by the Canterbury Municipality. Grants of 100 acres each to the south of

present Campsie were made in 1804 to her two teenage sons and a grant of 500 acres to herself in 1812. Her grant was divided by Wolli Creek which was to become the boundary between the Canterbury and Rockdale municipalities. She named her property King's Grove, in honour of Governor King. Eventually her



King

King's Grove property was taken over by entrepreneurs, first by S. Lord and later by Holden & Holt who subdivided it into small farms from four acres to 24 acres in area. Following his marriage in 1855 Charles settled on his farm with his wife. The area was almost all dense virgin bush and he continued his trade as a timber-getter and wood-cutter at Gannon's Forest, now Hurstville. He was one of those who ran little vessels carrying wood and timber to Botany.

In 1869 Charles was converted at the Newtown Church, was baptised there by Rev George Shepherd and became a member of the Church. In the same year he commenced a Sunday School in an empty building at Kingsgrove. One biographical account of his life states that he attended Methodist services before his conversion to the Baptist faith in 1869. It is true that he held Methodist services in his home in 1868 and is thought to have

been a member of a Methodist Church. The obvious explanation for the Methodist connection lies in the fewness of Baptist causes. On the family's arrival in 1848 the only Baptist Church outside the city area was at faraway Smithfield. However, Wesleyan chapels existed in the Canterbury district in the 1840s. It is possible that the Howards attended their services and young Charles may have attended Sunday School. Depending on where in Canterbury the Howards settled they may have attended any of three Wesleyan services. The main Church called Canterbury was on the Ashfield side, a second was established in a wooden building at Canterbury Village in 1841 and a third at Moorfield in 1850. The 1846 Census shows that for Canterbury Village apart from Anglicans, Presbyterians and Wesleyans there were no other Protestants in a total population of 218. The 1851 Census shows that of a total of 473 residents 49 were Other Protestants. Perhaps the Howards were among this 49. In view of the difficulties of travel and the fewness of Baptist Churches it is not surprising if the Howards attended Methodist services. After the formation of the Newtown Church in 1860 it seems probable that the family worshipped there from time to time so introducing Charles to Baptist practices in addition to the Baptist beliefs and principles of his parents. There can be no doubt that the Baptist tradition must have been quite strong for him eventually to travel the long distance to Newtown to attend Baptist services. On moving to Kingsgrove Charles and his wife may have attended from time to time a Wesleyan Church which had been built in 1856 on Forest Road to serve the village of Gannon's Forest (now called Hurstville and quite near the present Hurstville Railway station). It is easy to surmise that because of contacts made there he offered his home at Kingsgrove for services conducted by Wesleyans.

The significant facts are that Charles Howard of Baptist stock was baptised at Newtown and joined the Church there; that the same year he commenced a Sunday School at Kingsgrove; that Baptist services were held in his home on Stoney



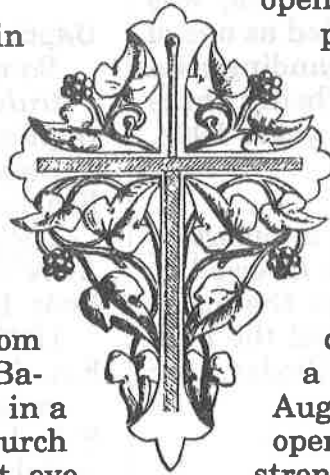
Creek Road; that in 1874 he donated part of his land for a Baptist Chapel which was built and opened in 1875.

The chapel was of sandstock brick seating about 80 persons. The foundation stone was laid on 24 May 1875, the materials cost £184 and the erection was mainly by voluntary labour. The pews of cedar and each seating four persons either side of a central aisle were donated by the Newtown Church. The chapel was opened on 12 September 1875. Services were maintained mostly by lay preachers from Newtown, Harris Street and Central Churches as well as by Charles Howard himself. The pastors at Newtown came frequently to their branch Church especially for special occasions and anniversaries. The population of the district was small and grew very slowly until the East Hills Railway reached Kingsgrove in 1930 and resulted in much building of residences. Congregations and Sunday School attendances increased bringing a need for modifications and extensions to the original building. Twice in the years between 1930 and 1940 the hall at the rear was extended to cope with growing numbers and after that it was obvious that a new building was needed. The adjacent land required for the new building was donated by William Howard, Charles' son, and the new building was opened in 1954.

The Kingsgrove Church owes much to Charles Howard and his son William. Charles was Secretary of the Church and Superintendent of the Sunday School till 1923. Charles was Treasurer for thirty years and organist for 75 years. He died at 96 in 1963. William was a cabinet maker and he made all the pews for the new Church.

Pioneering in the District

Charles Howard succeeded in arousing the interest of the Baptist community. In 1877 Rev H. Harvison of the Baptist Evangelists Society came and conducted special meetings on week day evenings. At the Anniversary celebrations on New Year's Day 1878, a large gathering of people from Newtown, Bourke Street and Bathurst Street Churches had tea in a booth erected in the Church grounds and joined in a great evening meeting addressed by Rev D. Fenwick, pastor of the Newtown Church and acting President of the Baptist Union.



It was not long before Charles Howard, the pioneer in the sparsely populated Kingsgrove set about pioneering other Churches in growing residential suburbs nearby. In the early months of 1879 Charles Howard began holding services in the home of a Baptist at Rocky Point (where George's River enters Botany Bay) apparently searching out Baptists in the area. How this effort prospered and when it ceased is unknown. The future effort at Sans Souci had a quite different beginning. In 1886 two outreach efforts commenced — a Church Mission was commenced in the Oddfellows Hall at the corner of Rocky Point Road and Regents Street, Kogarah; the second effort was the purchase of land at Lauff Street, Rockdale. On this land a chapel was built and opened on 11 April 1888 and regular services commenced. In 1891 on concluding as the Baptist Union Evangelist, Rev Charles Boyall became pastor of a circuit of three Churches based on Marrickville and including Kingsgrove and Rockdale. This Rockdale Church features in the Baptist Union directories for some years.

Carlton was the next suburb to draw the attention of Charles Howard. In July 1893 he wrote to the Baptist Union that Carlton was a growing suburb with several subdivisions but with "no means of grace" as yet. He said that a large hall had been rented in Fleet Street holding

150 people and that worship was opened on 16 July at 7 pm by the pastor of Kingsgrove, Rev C. Boyall. He added that services would be held regularly every Sunday at 7 pm and that it was hoped to start a Sunday School shortly. After some time the meetings moved from Cooper's Hall to a cottage. Eventually a site was purchased, the gift of William White, a foundation stone was laid on 3 August 1895 and the building opened on 12 January 1896. A strong cause was established and some credit must go for this eventual success to the initial move by Charles Howard through his Kingsgrove Church.

The launching of Arncliffe Church owes much to the Kingsgrove Church and its Secretary, Charles Howard. When a group of Baptists in that suburb decided to commence services in August 1905 Kingsgrove Church paid the rent of the Temperance Hall for the first six months as a gesture of support and to allow the worshippers there time to organise themselves as a congregation.

Charles Howard also took a practical interest in the beginnings of the Church at Bexley, the suburb neighbouring Kingsgrove. A group of Baptists began cottage meetings in 1912. Howard persuaded the Kingsgrove Church to purchase a site on the corner of Stoney Creek, Forest and Kingsland Roads and handed it to the Home Mission. Hugh Dixson considering the site too small added an adjoining allotment. When a Church was formed, which decided to build, Kingsgrove promised to pay the first year's instalment of £50 on the money raised to build, the amount to be repaid at £10 per year.

Charles Howard showed his energy, initiative and managerial powers in other spheres than his Church. A municipality for Hurstville was proclaimed in 1887 and at the first election for nine aldermen Charles Howard, described as a capitalist, was one of the successful candidates from the eighteen who nominated. Obviously he was well-known

and respected. When the municipality of Bexley was established in 1900 he was again successful in being elected as one of the original aldermen. His standing as a public figure is seen in his being three times Mayor of Bexley for the years 1906, 1907 and 1911.

It is interesting to note that a report in *The Baptist* of 1/1/1912 of the farewell to Rev J. Parker at Carlton, says the meeting was closed with prayer and the benediction by the Mayor of Bexley, Mr Charles Howard.

H. Watkin-Smith

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Note: Dr Chatfield's paper has been held over for a future issue

